



## Greek fruit and veg exports to European destinations on the rise

In the first half of this year, Greek fruit and vegetable exports to the European markets, both within and without the EU, continued to grow. However, in the same period, Greek exports to markets outside of Europe dropped once again. These are the latest data from the Hellenic Statistical Office of Greece (ELSTAT), processed by the Association of Greek Exporters of Fruits, Vegetables and Juices.

According to the special advisor of the association, Giorgos Polychronakis, in the first half of this year, the value of Greek fresh fruit and vegetable exports to EU markets amounted to 438.9 million Euro (+26.7% compared to the same period last year), while those to other European countries increased by 5.4%, to 127.5 million Euro, and in countries outside of the continent, they dropped by 5.5%, to 29.9 million Euro. In terms of volume, Greek exports to the EU amounted to 654,025 tons (+17.4% compared to 2017) and those to third countries stood at 180,961 tons (-0.9% compared to the first half of 2017).

According to Mr. Polychronakis, the increase in Greek fruit and vegetable sales in the EU is mainly due to the performance of kiwifruit, as this fruit's export value has increased by 87.8%, reaching 65.25 million Euro.

Exports to Germany, Romania and Bulgaria, which are the three most important export destinations for Greece, grew by 32.5%, 20.6% and 13.9%, respectively, and were worth 89.3, 60.5 and 42.8 million Euro. Greek fruit and vegetable exports to the United Kingdom, the ninth biggest destination for the country, rose by 27%, to 19.8 million Euro.

Greek fruit and vegetable exports to European markets outside of the EU also recorded a positive trend, with a value amounting to € 127.6 million (+5.4%); 22.5% of the total, as pointed out by Mr Polychronakis. "This increase is mainly due to the fact that sales to non-EU European countries grew by 9.2% compared to 2017, totaling € 97.6 million," he said.

In the fruit sector, as explained by Polychronakis, "mandarins (+54.8%), oranges (+15%) and strawberries (+5.3%) recorded noteworthy growth figures in the first half of this year, while apples recorded modest results." As for vegetables, cucumber and tomato shipments saw their volumes grow by 29.7% and 6.1%, respectively.



According to Mr. Polychronakis, "based on provisional data from the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the export of summer fruits had increased by around 5% by August 31 2018, with the prospect of even better results in the end."

### **Greek exports to third countries dropped by 5.53%**

Greek fruit and vegetable exports to markets outside Europe were worth €29.9 million Euro, which entailed a 5.53% drop. According to Mr. Polychronakis, this development is due to the reduction in the export of apples, which is down by 56.4% in terms of volume and by 44.6% in terms of value. The biggest drop has been observed in the shipments to Egypt.

In this context, Mr. Polychronakis reiterated that the Association is "always involved in trade negotiations with other states to promote the approval of phytosanitary protocols as a matter of priority, but also to improve and restore the principle of Community preference for fruit and vegetables (entry price system and preferential agreements).

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